


# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – COMMUNITY MEALS SERVICE

## SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

<b>Author(s):</b> The person completing the EIA template.	Andrea Langman, Commissioning Officer	<b>Department and service:</b>	Strategic Cooperative Commissioning	<b>Date of assessment:</b>	10/11/2025
<b>Lead Officer:</b> Head of Service, Service Director, or Strategic Director.	Louise Ford, Head of Commissioning	<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Approval date:</b>	14/11/2025
<b>Overview:</b>	<p>The community meals service in Plymouth is provided by CATERed, a cooperative trading company originally formed by schools and the Council to deliver the school meals service. Community meals for adults (sometimes referred to as 'meals on wheels') were subsequently added to CATERed's remit in 2013.</p> <p>The community meals service is funded through income CATERed receives from approximately 150 customers purchasing meals. However, CATERed has consistently also required a subsidy from the Council's adult social care budget for the community meals service to break even.</p> <p>By subsidising the cost of community meals, the Council is technically not acting in accordance with the duties of the Care Act 2014, within which meals are considered a daily living cost. Adult social care funding can contribute to daily living costs, but this depends on the individual's financial circumstances and the type of care they need. If a person has been assessed as having eligible needs for social care support, the local authority may contribute towards the cost of their care, including some daily living costs. However, individuals may still be expected to contribute towards these costs, especially if they have savings or income. Adult social care should not be funding or subsidising care for people who are self-funding. Individuals who do not qualify for local authority adult social care support should pay for all care costs including daily living costs.</p> <p>Research undertaken by the Association for Public Sector Excellence in 2023 found that only 29% of UK local authorities and less than 18% of English local authorities still offer a 'meals on wheels' type service. The cost of community meals in Plymouth were found to be the highest in the country at that time. Continuing to subsidise the cost of community meals does not support the Council to achieve good value for public money.</p>				

<b>Decision required:</b>	To cease the Council subsidy to CATERed for the provision of a community meals service with effect from 28 February 2026.
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## SECTION TWO: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING TOOL

<b>Potential external impacts:</b> Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact service users, communities or residents with protected characteristics?	<b>Yes</b>	X	<b>No</b>	
<b>Potential internal impacts:</b> Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact Plymouth City Council employees?	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	X
Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (if you have answered yes to either of the questions above then a full impact assessment is required and you must complete section three)	<b>Yes</b>	X	<b>No</b>	
If you do not agree that a full equality impact assessment is required, please set out your justification for why not.				

## SECTION THREE: FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Protected characteristics (Equality Act, 2010)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and consultation feedback)	Adverse impact	Mitigation activities	Timescale and responsible department
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<b>Age</b>	<p>Plymouth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16.4 per cent of people in Plymouth are children aged under 15.</li> <li>• 65.1 per cent are adults aged 15 to 64.</li> <li>• 18.5 percent are adults aged 65 and over.</li> <li>• 2.4 percent of the resident population are 85 and over.</li> </ul> <p>South West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15.9 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14, 61.8 per cent are aged 15 to 64.</li> <li>• 22.3 per cent are aged 65 and over.</li> </ul> <p>England</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17.4 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14.</li> <li>• 64.2 per cent of people are aged 15 to 64.</li> <li>• 18.4 per cent of people are aged 65 and over.</li> </ul> <p>(2021 Census)</p>	<p>CATERed's community meals service is available to people aged 18 and over. There are currently 150 customers receiving at least one meal per week.</p> <p>It is anticipated that if CATERed decide to end provision of the community meals service on cessation of the Council subsidy, this could create a potential adverse impact for older adults, who are likely to form the majority of the current customer base.</p>	<p>If CATERed decide to end provision of the community meals service, the Council will work closely with CATERed to implement a communication and support plan, to ensure that:</p> <p>Customers are informed of alternative sources of home delivered meals – either freshly cooked, or chilled / frozen 'ready meals' to reheat at home.</p> <p>Customers are also provided with information regarding wider support and opportunities available in the local community, including through the Council's network of Wellbeing Hubs. Information provided will include details of local befriending and 'good neighbour' schemes, as well as contact details for adult social care, so that if they are concerned that they will require additional support with</p>	<p>December 2025</p> <p>Strategic Cooperative Commissioning</p>
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		<p>ordering and/or reheating chilled/frozen meals at home and wish to request an assessment or reassessment of their own support needs and/or those of any unpaid carers.</p> <p>The Council's commissioned adult social care provider, Livewell South West, is made aware of any community meals service customers who also have a social care package in place, and whose circumstances may need to be reviewed in case they require additional support with ordering and/or reheating chilled / frozen ready meals at home.</p> <p>Other providers commissioned by the Council, for example domiciliary care agencies, are also made aware in case any of their clients are affected and may require additional</p>	
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			support during home visits.	
<b>Care experienced individuals</b> (Note that as per the Independent Review of Children's Social Care recommendations, Plymouth City Council is treating care experience as though it is a protected characteristic).	<p>It is estimated that 26 per cent of the homeless population in the UK have care experience. In Plymouth there are currently 7 per cent of care leavers open to the service (6 per cent aged 18-20 and 12 per cent of those aged 21+) who are in unsuitable accommodation.</p> <p>The Care Review reported that 41 per cent of 19-21 year old care leavers are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 12 per cent of all other young people in the same age group.</p> <p>In Plymouth there are currently 50 per cent of care leavers aged 18-21 Not in Education Training or Employment (54 per cent of all those care leavers aged 18-24 who are open to the service).</p> <p>There are currently 195 care leavers aged 18 to 20 (statutory service) and 58 aged 21 to 24 (extended offer). There are more care leavers aged 21 to 24 who could return for support from services if they wished to.</p>	None identified	N/A	N/A

<b>Disability</b>	<p>9.4 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a lot' because of a physical or mental health problem.</p> <p>12.2 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a little' because of a physical or mental health problem (2021 Census)</p>	<p>CATERed's community meals service is available to people aged 18 and over. There are currently 150 customers receiving at least one meal per week.</p> <p>It is anticipated that if CATERed decide to end provision of the community meals service on cessation of the Council subsidy, this could create a potential adverse impact for people with a disability effecting their ability to shop for, prepare and cook daily meals at home.</p>	<p>If CATERed decide to end provision of the community meals service, the Council will work closely with CATERed to implement a communication and support plan, to ensure that:</p> <p>Customers are informed of alternative sources of home delivered meals – either freshly cooked, or chilled / frozen 'ready meals' to reheat at home.</p> <p>Customers are also provided with information regarding wider support and opportunities available in the local community, including through the Council's network of Wellbeing Hubs.</p> <p>Information provided will include details of local befriending and 'good neighbour' schemes, as well as contact details for adult social care, so that if they are concerned that they will require additional support with</p>	<p>December 2025</p> <p>Strategic Cooperative Commissioning</p>
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			support during home visits.	
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	0.5 per cent of residents in Plymouth have a gender identity that is different from their sex registered at birth. 0.1 per cent of residents identify as a trans man, 0.1 per cent identify as non-binary and, 0.1 per cent identify as a trans women (2021 Census).	None identified	N/A	N/A
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	40.1 per cent of residents have never married and never registered a civil partnership. 10 per cent are divorced, 6 percent are widowed, with 2.5 per cent are separated but still married.  0.49 per cent of residents are, or were, married or in a civil partnerships of the same sex. 0.06 per cent of residents are in a civil partnerships with the opposite sex (2021 Census).	None identified	N/A	N/A
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	The total fertility rate (TFR) for England was 1.62 children per woman in 2021. The total fertility rate (TFR) for Plymouth in 2021 was 1.5.	None identified	N/A	N/A



<b>Race</b>	<p>In 2021, 94.9 per cent of Plymouth's population identified their ethnicity as White, 2.3 per cent as Asian and 1.1 per cent as Black (2021 Census)</p> <p>People with a mixed ethnic background comprised 1.8 per cent of the population. 1 per cent of the population use a different term to describe their ethnicity (2021 Census)</p> <p>92.7 per cent of residents speak English as their main language. 2021 Census data shows that after English, Polish, Romanian, Chinese, Portuguese, and Arabic are the most spoken languages in Plymouth (2021 Census).</p>	None identified	N/A	N/A
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<p>48.9 per cent of the Plymouth population stated they had no religion. 42.5 per cent of the population identified as Christian (2021 Census).</p> <p>Those who identified as Muslim account for 1.3 per cent of Plymouth's population while Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh combined totalled less than 1 per cent (2021 Census).</p>	None identified	N/A	N/A
<b>Sex</b>	51 per cent of our population are women and 49 per cent are men (2021 Census).	None identified	N/A	N/A
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	88.95 per cent of residents aged 16 years and over in Plymouth describe their sexual orientation as straight or heterosexual. 2.06 per cent describe their sexuality as bisexual, 1.97 per cent of people describe their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian. 0.42 per cent of residents describe their sexual orientation using a different term (2021 Census).	None identified	N/A	N/A

**SECTION FOUR: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

Human Rights	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
	None identified	N/A	N/A

**SECTION FIVE: OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES**

Equality objectives	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
<b>Work together in partnership to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>promote equality, diversity and inclusion</li> <li>facilitate community cohesion</li> <li>support people with different backgrounds and lived experiences to get on well together</li> </ul>	None identified	N/A	N/A
<b>Give specific consideration to care experienced people to improve their life outcomes, including access to training, employment and housing.</b>	None identified	N/A	N/A
<b>Build and develop a diverse workforce that represents the community and citizens it serves.</b>	None identified	N/A	N/A
<b>Support diverse communities to feel confident to report crime and anti-social behaviour, including hate crime and hate incidents, and work with partners to ensure Plymouth is a city where everybody feels safe and welcome.</b>	None identified	N/A	N/A